DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 339 464 PS 020 041

TITLE Guidelines for the Implementation of the New York State Prekindergarten Program.
INSTITUTION New York State Education Dept., Albany. Div. of Child Development Services.
PUB DATE 91
NOTE 37p.
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Child Caregivers; Child Health; Compliance (Legal); *Disadvantaged Youth; Economically Disadvantaged; Models; Needs Assessment; Nutrition; *Preschool Education; *Program Implementation; *Public Schools; Safety; Social Services; Staff Development; *State Programs; Transportation; Young Children
IDENTIFIERS *Boards of Cooperative Educational Services; *New York

ABSTRACT

Guidelines are presented for New York's prekindergarten program for 4-year-old children from economically disadvantaged families, which is intended to provide the young child with a comfortable, secure, and inviting transition from home to school. Eligible providers are public school districts and Boards of Cooperative Educational Services, who can apply for state funding to operate these programs. Application and approval procedures are described briefly. Program models are cited, and the following program requirements are outlined: needs assessment, recruitment and selection process, physical facilities, transportation, safety and sanitation, health and nutrition, educational program (staffing, equipment, discipline, evaluation), staff development, parent involvement, social services, continuity of program and services, and coordination with other early childhood programs and community agencies. Compliance with New York State Prekindergarten regulations is also addressed. Definitions, a publication list, and sample forms are appended. (LB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☒ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ED339464

GUIDELINES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW YORK STATE PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Robert M. Trombly
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

The University of the State of New York
The State Education Department
Division of Child Development Services

PS 020041

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy

GUIDELINES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW YORK STATE PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Robert M. Trombly

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

The University of the State of New York
The State Education Department
Division of Child Development Services

PS 020041

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK

Regents of The University

MARTIN C. BARELL, *Chancellor*, B.A., I.A., LL.B.	Muttontown
R. CARLOS CARBALLADA, *Vice Chancellor*, B.S.	Rochester
WILLARD A. GENRICH, LL.B.	Buffalo
EMLYN I. GRIFFITH, A.B., J.D.	Rome
JORGE L. BATISTA, B.A., J.D.	Bronx
LAURA BRADLEY CHODOS, B.A., M.A.	Vischer Ferry
LOUISE P. MATTEONI, B.A., M.A., Ph.D.	Bayside
J. EDWARD MEYER, B.A., LL.B.	Chappaqua
FLOYD S. LINTON, A.B., M.A., M.P.A.	Miller Place
MIMI LEVIN LIEBER, B.A., M.A.	Manhattan
SHIRLEY C. BROWN, B.A., M.A., Ph.D.	Albany
NORMA GLUCK, B.A., M.S.W.	Manhattan
ADELAIDE L. SANFORD, B.A., M.A., P.D.	Hollis
WALTER COOPER, B.A., Ph.D.	Rochester
CARL T. HAYDEN, A.B., J.D.	Elmira
DIANE O'NEILL MCGIVERN, B.S.N., M.A., Ph.D.	Staten Island

President of The University and Commissioner of Education
THOMAS SOBOL

Executive Deputy Commissioner of Education
THOMAS E. SHELDON

Deputy Commissioner for Elementary and Secondary Education
ARTHUR L. WALTON, JR.

Assistant Commissioner for General and Occupational Education
LORRAINE R. MERRICK

Director, Division of Child Development Services
CASSANDRA GRANT

Chief, Division of Child Development Services
MARY J. BONDARIN

The State Education Department does not discriminate on the basis of age, color, religion, creed, disability, marital status, veteran status, national origin, race, gender or sexual orientation in the educational programs and activities which it operates. Portions of this publication can be made available in a variety of formats, including braille, large print or audio tape, upon request. Inquiries concerning this policy of equal opportunity and affirmative action should be referred to the Department's Affirmative Action Officer, NYS Education Department, 89 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12234.

CONTENTS

I. Introduction 1

II. Eligible Providers 3

III. Application Procedures 4

IV. Approval of Consolidated Application 6

V. Program Models 7
- A. Program Variations 7
- B. Program Variances 8
- C. Format of Program 8

VI. Program Requirements 9
- A. Needs Assessment 9
- B. Recruitment and Selection Process 9
- C. Physical Facilities 10
- D. Transportation 10
- E. Safety and Sanitation 11
- F. Health and Nutrition 11
- G. Educational Program 12
  - 1. Staffing patterns and qualifications 14
  - 2. Equipment, supplies, and materials 17
  - 3. Discipline 17
  - 4. Evaluation 17
- H. Staff Development 18
- I. Parent Involvement 19
- J. Social Services 20
- K. Continuity of Program and Services 20
- L. Coordination with Other Early Childhood Programs and Community Agencies 21

VII. Compliance with New York State Prekindergarten Regulations 22

VIII. Appendices 23
- Appendix 1 - Definitions 23
- Appendix 2 - Publications 25
- Appendix 3 - Sample Forms 26

I. INTRODUCTION

Recognizing the importance of the early years as crucial for laying the foundation for the physical, intellectual, social, and emotional development of young children, the Board of Regents requests appropriations annually from the Legislature to fund the New York State Prekindergarten Program for four-year-old children from economically disadvantaged families. The authority for this Program is contained in Part 151 of the Regulations of the Commissioner regarding Apportionment for Prekindergarten Programs. The program is administered and monitored by the Division of Child Development Services. Division staff are assigned to specific districts to provide technical assistance to Prekindergarten Programs.

A quality educational program in prekindergarten must be planned to meet the varying developmental levels of the children it serves by providing appropriate experiences. Activities must be designed to help children learn through a "hands-on", play-oriented approach which will motivate the child to want to continue to be a learner. Appropriate experiences take advantage of the child's natural abilities, interests, and enthusiasm for learning, while at the same time meet the child's individual needs.

Each child is unique with an individual personality, learning style, and pattern of growth. Recognition of these individual differences dictates a variety of teaching methods, adult expectations, and assessment strategies. The Prekindergarten Program is not intended to focus on the acquisition of readiness skills nor to require children to adjust to the demands of a specific academic program which may be inappropriate for their developmental levels. The focus should be on the child's learning how to learn, not what to learn. Emphasis on the development of social competencies is so essential to the child's being able to cope successfully within the school environment and to profit from appropriate learning activities.

The Prekindergarten Program is intended to provide the young child with a comfortable, secure, and inviting transition from home to school. The classroom is equipped with a variety of clearly defined interest centers. Children choose from activities which provide opportunities for creative expression, dramatic play, block building, emergent literacy, woodwork constructions, manipulative materials, and science exploration with natural materials including water and sand. Adults are available to converse with children, to question and extend the child's experiences. There is time each day for children to come together for discussions, to sing songs, listen to a story, and share a meal. The schedule should provide for a balance of quiet and active times, indoor and outdoor gross motor activities, and large and small group experiences. Play is an important part of the early childhood curriculum. It integrates and generates knowledge — through play, children develop physical, social, problem solving and language skills, moral judgments, and autonomy.

A comprehensive developmental Prekindergarten Program must include the following components:

- a quality educational program for children;

- health services;
- social services;
- nutrition services;
- the active involvement of parents in all aspects of the program; and
- developmental continuity of programs and services for children throughout kindergarten and the primary grades.

When expectations exceed children's capabilities and they are pressured to acquire skills beyond their capacity and/or age levels, their motivation to learn and their basic self-esteem may be impaired. The result is often counter-productive to the original intention of the Prekindergarten Program: i.e., to provide children who are potentially "at-risk" with a better chance for school success and a better hope for their future. These "better beginnings," with the continued commitment to educational success for all, will assure "stronger completions" for more children in New York State.

II. ELIGIBLE PROVIDERS

Public school districts and Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) are eligible to apply for funding to operate New York State Prekindergarten Programs for four-year-old children with educational needs associated with poverty.

III. APPLICATION PROCEDURES

Grants are awarded on a competitive basis to school districts and BOCES who submit an application which must describe plans to serve economically disadvantaged children and their families.

Each school district and BOCES applying for a grant must complete and submit a Consolidated Application annually to the Bureau of Grants Management, New York State Education Department, Albany, New York 12234. The Consolidated Application is sent to all school districts and BOCES in the Spring of each year.

The school district or BOCES must include the following information in their application:

- The philosophy and goals of the district's prekindergarten program.
- A description of the district's needs assessment and the rationale for opening and/or continuing the district's prekindergarten program.
- A description of services available within the community to meet the needs of eligible families.
- A description of other early childhood programs that serve prekindergarten children in the community.
- A general description of the families of prekindergarten children in the district, their income level, cultural and linguistic background, housing environment, and other indicators of socioeconomic status.
- A description of the plan to recruit and select four-year-olds for the prekindergarten program.
- The number of prekindergarten children to be served by each session of the program and the number of such children who are economically disadvantaged.
- A description of the indoor and outdoor facilities to be used, whether district owned, rented, or leased.
- A description of services to be implemented to address the needs of children and families which shall include but not be limited to the following:
  - (i) social services;
  - (ii) health services;
  - (iii) nutrition services;
  - (iv) parent involvement;
  - (v) continuity of program and services to kindergarten through third grade; and
  - (vi) coordination with other early childhood and community agencies.
- A description of the daily activities in which the children are involved.
- A description of materials and equipment to be used for the prekindergarten program.
- A description of a plan to provide meals to children who will participate in the program.
- A description of a plan to ensure parent involvement.
- A description of the space to be used for parent activities.
- Documentation of the qualifications of the professional, ancillary, and consultative staff, whether employed on a full- or part-time basis, which shall include but shall not be limited to the following:
  - (i) for consultants only, a copy of a resume;
  - (ii) for professional staff, teaching, administrative licenses, or certificate numbers;

(iii) title of position;

(iv) name of current supervisor; and

(v) percentage of work hours assigned to the prekindergarten program.

- A description of the staff development plan.
- A description of the assessment process to be used to evaluate the accomplishment of the goals of the prekindergarten program.
- A description of the plan and rationale for all transportation to be provided, if any, which transportation shall be consistent with the requirements of all applicable statutes, the Commissioner's Regulations, and school district policy.
- A description of the proposed budget for the program, indicating in detail the manner in which funds are expected to be received and disbursed, including all funds used in connection with the program, whether appropriated by the State Legislature or otherwise appropriated or provided by a local government, a public agency, private persons or organizations, or the school district itself. The proposed budget shall be developed on the basis that costs will be shared by the State and the local school district, with the methodology to determine the State share to be established annually by the Commissioner with the approval of the Director of the Budget.

IV. APPROVAL OF CONSOLIDATED APPLICATION

The Department will approve or disapprove the Consolidated Application within a reasonable time frame. In making a decision, the Department may take into account all aspects of the district's application including, but not limited to, the following:

- Evidence that the district has a concentration of low income families who need services;
- The program must serve at least 80 percent economically disadvantaged children or serve all children residing in the district who are economically disadvantaged and whose parents want them to attend.
- The goals of the program meet the needs of the children being served.
- The activities are developmentally appropriate for the ages of the children enrolled and that there is appropriate staff, facilities, equipment, and supplies to meet the goals of the program.
- There is appropriate supervision provided.
- There is enough funding to operate a quality prekindergarten program.
- The budget in the application reflects a ratio of 89 percent State funding and at least 11 percent local funding.

V. PROGRAM MODELS

To receive funding to operate a New York State Prekindergarten Program a school district or BOCES has the option of implementing any one of the following:

1. ***Traditional Prekindergarten Model***

   An early childhood program which provides developmentally appropriate activities and comprehensive services for children for not less than 12 hours per week and not less than 2 1/2 hours per day.

2. ***Community Schools Prekindergarten Model***

   An early childhood component of a Community Schools Program (CSP) which provides developmentally appropriate activities and comprehensive services for not less than five days per week and not less than six hours per day (full year, when funding is available).

3. ***Collaborative Prekindergarten Model***

   An early childhood program, jointly developed and funded by the State Education Department and the Department of Social Services and/or Head Start to provide developmentally appropriate activities and comprehensive services for children for not less than five days per week and not less than six hours per day.

Each program model must provide the following components:

Education;
Health and Nutrition Services;
Social Services;
Parent Involvement;
Staff Development; and
Continuity of children's experiences beyond Prekindergarten.

4. ***Home-Based Prekindergarten Model***

   An early childhood program which provides developmentally appropriate activities for children and comprehensive services for parents through regular visits by a trained staff member in the home.

A. PROGRAM VARIATIONS

A school district or BOCES may include in the Consolidated Application one or more of the following variations of the Prekindergarten Program:

- To serve three-year-olds: Districts who wish to enroll three-year-olds must provide a statement signed by the superintendent that the district is first serving all interested and eligible four-year-olds.
- To provide a Prekindergarten Program in conjunction with a Community Schools Program: Districts who wish to operate a Community Schools Prekindergarten Program must provide a rationale for the program.
- To provide a joint Federal Chapter 1 and State Prekindergarten Program: Districts receiving in excess of $200,000 in Chapter 1 funds who wish to provide a joint Federal Chapter 1 and State Prekindergarten Program must describe the selection of children by age and educational need.
- To provide educational activities to children and parents in the home: Districts who wish to provide activities to children and parents through regular visits by a trained staff member, provided that such a program was funded during the 1983-89 school year, must provide a rationale for the program.

The school district or BOCES must describe the Program Variation in the narrative section of the Consolidated Application.

B. PROGRAM VARIANCES

Districts who wish to request a variance from Part 151.3(b) or Part 151.11(e) of the Regulations of the Commissioner must complete the Application for Approval of Variances for the New York State Prekindergarten Program. Such variances may be requested for the following:

- To enroll a child other than three or four years old;
- Class size;
- Limitations on program hours;
- The number of days per week that services are provided;
- Staffing patterns; and
- Home-based programs.

The school district or BOCES may include the Application for Approval of Variances in the Consolidated Application or may submit it during the school year.

C. FORMAT OF PROGRAM

The format and implementation of a quality Prekindergarten Program may differ significantly from the program in other elementary grades in the following ways:

- The provision of comprehensive, personalized services for children and families who have been identified as potentially "at risk" because of low economic status, including those whose primary language is not English;
- Half day sessions, 2 1/2 to 3 hours;
- Yearly schedule for children: The Prekindergarten Program usually follows the school district's calendar. However, the beginning program for children should follow a special opening schedule which may include preservice training for staff and orientation for parents, setting up the learning environment, making visits to each family, and continuing recruitment if necessary. The children in Prekindergarten should not start on the first day of school. A "staggered" entrance schedule of at least three or four days is recommended to permit children to enter gradually (five children the first day, five more on the second day, with all children present by the third or fourth day) in order for them to become oriented to the new school experience in small groups and adjust more easily to the school routine;
- In order to schedule final staff evaluative reviews of the program and parent conferences, the program for children may end earlier than the other classes in the district. The Consolidated Application should include plans for both opening and closing schedules;
- Limited group size and teacher-child ratio which enables individualized and age-appropriate provisioning and planning;
- Intergrating of three- and four-year-olds in one classroom if the program includes three-year-olds;
- A comprehensive program for children which includes a developmentally appropriate curriculum health, social services, and nutrition components;
- Emphasis on *prevention* not remediation in all program components;
- A focus on strengthening each child's natural disposition for learning with daily activities that emerge from the needs and interests of the children involved rather than from a prescribed curriculum;
- A learning climate in the classroom which is child-centered, busy, and conversational in tone, which offers opportunities for children to initiate activities and interact with the people and materials in the environment;
- The expansion of the concept of "teacher" is to include all the adults with whom the child comes into contact; all adults are viewed as important supportive resources for the facilitating of the child's learning;
- A comprehensive assessment of children's progress using a variety of measurement techniques including teacher observations and anecdotal records, a portfolio of dated samples of children's work, and may include developmental checklists;
- An awareness of the need to reflect cultural and linguistic diversity in program planning and assessment;
- A strong parent component, including a parent advisory committee that emphasizes working in partnership with all families in the education of their children and in helping them improve the quality of their lives;
- Required time for staff development activities, parent contacts, and child study teams. Suggested minimum - 1 day or 2 half days per month. The needs and concerns of children and parents in the community should be considered before deciding when to close the children's program for these activities;
- A comprehensive plan must be developed to evaluate the effectiveness of the program.

VI. PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

A. NEEDS ASSESSMENT

School districts and BOCES must complete a needs assessment which includes specific data to substantiate community needs and concerns. The demographic information must document the number of four-year-olds eligible for the Prekindergarten Program. These children must be identified on the Index of Need form which is designed to identify children in the district with the greatest needs.

The program must serve at least 80 percent economically disadvantaged children ***or*** serve all children residing in the district whose parents wish them to attend and are economically disadvantaged. The remaining percentage of children enrolled ***may*** represent a socio-economic mix. The intent of the program is to serve the neediest children. It is anticipated that programs electing to serve 20 percent or more of over income children will first extend services to the low income working poor. Individual districts should decide, based on demographic information and recruitment results, how best to serve families in their communities. The Consolidated Application should reflect identification and integration of children from low income families with special needs, i.e., migrant children, children with handicapping conditions and/or children whose primary language is not English.

School districts and BOCES must document sources of demographic data (i.e., United States Census, school district census, referrals from community agencies). Every effort should be made to collect accurate, up-to-date, factual information to substantiate the need for establishing or continuing a Prekindergarten Program in the community.

The Needs Assessment must include:

- A description of the families of four-year-olds in the district, their income level, cultural and linguistic background, housing situations and other indicators of socio-economic status;
- A description of services available within the community to meet the needs of target families;
- Identification of gaps in services;
- A description of other early childhood programs in the district that serve four-year-olds.

It is recommended that an assessment be made of the impact of the implementation of a developmental prekindergarten program on the district. Considerations should include:

- Provision of appropriate education and other services in the primary grades;
- Provision of activities to encourage coordination among staff of primary grades;
- Availability of adequate space.

B. RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCESS

A comprehensive plan for recruitment must be described in the narrative portion of the Consolidated Application. The process should use available sources of information, including United States Census and school census data and referrals from other helping agencies in the community. Contacts with local departments of social services, health and mental health providers, religious organizations, day care centers, family courts, drug treatment facilities, cooperative extension agents, school psychologists, and social workers will facilitate the process.

Recruitment plans can be modified in order to reach children from varying cultural and linguistic groups. For

example, announcements and other modes of recruitment aimed at language minority populations may need to be developed in various languages in order to ensure equity and access to services to families who may be unaware of the availability and enrollment policies of the New York State Prekindergarten Program.

Inclusion of children with handicapping conditions who would be appropriately placed within the program is encouraged. The State Education Department funds a network of Early Childhood Direction Centers designed to assist parents and professionals in securing services for young children with handicapping conditions below five years of age. Programs are encouraged to contact the local Early Childhood Direction Center. This will assist the Direction Center in referring parents to the Prekindergarten Programs as an available option in appropriate cases.

In addition, it is important to note that funds for special education, for handicapped children below the age of five are available which include related services. For further information, contact the Office for Education of Children with Handicapping Conditions.

Information about children selected must be recorded on the Index of Need form and kept on file for review by staff from the Division of Child Development Services. Children selected for participation must be designated in the space provided on the form.

C. PHYSICAL FACILITIES

Space should be sufficient to provide a safe, clean, well-lighted environment that promotes the active development of the child, while also responding to the needs of the parents. Classrooms should be located on the first floor of the building, preferably near other primary grades. A toilet and sink must be part of, or immediately accessible to, the classroom. Space must be accessible for children with handicapping conditions. Consideration needs to be given to modifications that may have to be made to accommodate the children enrolled. Any variation of classroom location must be approved by the Department.

It is vital for the growth and development of young children that the indoor and outdoor physical environment provide opportunities for exploration and learning. A minimum of 30 *square feet per child* of usable activity space, excluding offices, hallways, cloakrooms, bathrooms, and storage facilities, must be available.

Appropriate space must be designated for parent activities. A comfortable and welcoming environment for all families that include pictures and materials showing parents representative of the population served in nurturing roles is recommended, as well as information on educational and job/training opportunities. It is encouraged that posted notices and signs, as well as information sent home to parents, be written in the language of the families served.

There must be access to an outdoor play area of 75 square feet per child. However, a district with less than 75 square feet per child available may submit a diagram that shows that the equipment is adequately arranged and document that the area will be used only by small groups at one time. Outdoor areas are to be well-supervised, safe, secure and checked daily for glass or other hazards. Age-appropriate playground equipment provided, can be adapted for children with handicapping conditions.

Indoor and outdoor facilities must be approved by the Division of Child Development Services as described in *Children's Spaces*. Leased facilities or facilities used on a temporary basis require annual approval by the Bureau of Facilities Planning of the State Education Department. The district may directly contact the Educational Facilities and Management Services at the State Education Department for information and to receive the necessary forms.

D. TRANSPORTATION

All transportation must be provided in accordance with local school district and Department of Transportation guidelines. Description of transportation between home and center should include information about length of time children ride the bus, the number of stops, and the adult supervision provided. Funds may be budgeted to cover the cost of the difference between regular transportation on district buses and the additional cost necessary for transporting prekindergarten children. ***Districts providing transportation through contracted services must submit a copy of the signed contract with their application***. When a school district provides transportation from home to the prekindergarten program, consideration should be given to provide transportation from the school to home or to whatever child care arrangement the family has made. Alternatively, a child may be transported from child care to school, and returned home at the end of the day.

Children under five years of age who receive special education services are eligible for free transportation to the Prekindergarten Program. The Early Childhood Direction Centers can provide information and assistance.

All carriers must comply with New York State regulations on use of seat belts. Bus drivers, aides, and other adult riders should have an orientation to the special needs and appropriate management of young children. It is recommended that at least one adult riding the bus be able to communicate with children and parents whose primary language is not English.

E. SAFETY AND SANITATION

The Prekindergarten Program must provide a safe and sanitary environment which includes, but not be limited to the following:

- Fire drills must be held in accordance with the provisions in Section 807 of the Education Law. A record of these drills must be maintained;
- Furniture should be safe and arranged in such a way as not to present hazards to the young children and adults;
- Outdoor equipment such as swings, slides, and climbing apparatus should be anchored firmly to the ground, be in good repair, and be placed in a safe location. Such equipment shall be used only by children for whom it is developmentally appropriate;
- Rules of appropriate behavior that ensure safety while using the play equipment;
- Materials and play equipment used by the children should be of substantial construction and free from rough edges and sharp corners;
- Indoor and outdoor plants should not be accessible to children without supervision;
- Toilet facilities should be kept clean and supplied with soap and disposable towels easily accessible to the children;
- Linens, blankets, and bedding should be cleaned at least weekly. Cots should be cleaned thoroughly with a cleaning agent at least monthly;
- Trash and garbage should not be stored in rooms or in outdoor areas occupied by or accessible to children;
- All floors, walls, ceilings, and other surfaces must be clean and in good repair;
- Children and staff should wash their hands before meals and after using the toilet. When necessary, the staff will assist children in hand washing;
- All cleaning, medical, and/or toxic materials are to be stored in an area not accessible to children;
- Adults should use bathrooms other than those designated for use by children; and
- All sharp instruments such as adult scissors, paper cutters, and adult tools should not be accessible to children without adult supervision.

F. HEALTH AND NUTRITION

Health

The Prekindergarten Program is concerned with each child's physical and emotional health. The district must describe a comprehensive health services program in the Consolidated Application, and should use the publication, *Health Services in Schools* as a reference. Each program must ensure the health and safety of all children and focus on protecting them from child abuse and neglect. It is recommended that staff, children, and their families be educated in positive procedures for health and safety.

No child may participate in the Prekindergarten Program unless:

- A report of a medical examination of the child signed by a physician is submitted within 30 days of admission which states that the child is free from contagious or communicable disease;
- The child has been immunized to the extent appropriate to his/her age in accordance with Section 2164 of the Public Health Law; or has been granted an exemption from such immunization.

The Prekindergarten Program must have a written plan on file which describes the medical and health policies and procedures and which have been explained to all staff and parents. It is recommended that this plan include, but not be limited to the following:

- Provision for dental assessments and follow-up;
- An evaluation of vision and hearing;
- Timely referral and follow-up of identified health problems;
- Provision of and/or referral for specialized assessment when indicated;
- The training of the teacher or another responsible person to recognize symptoms of illness and communicable diseases, and evidence of child abuse or neglect;
- The provision of appropriate instruction to enable staff to observe symptoms of illness in the children which require medical care;
- Special attention and posting of any allergy and/or individual health problems;
- Procedures for initiating the permanent school health record with maintenance of up-to-date records of the child's health assessment and any referral and follow-up interventions;
- Regular health and safety education for all staff which may include training in first aid, CPR and

emergency procedures according to district policy, and training to ensure staff sensitivity when working on health problems with families;

- Provision of staff health screening in accordance with local school district policy;
- Appropriate space to isolate children who become ill or need to rest during the day;
- Reporting of suspected incidents of child abuse and/or neglect as required by district policy and State laws and regulations;
- Procedures for the care of any child who has or develops symptoms of illness or is injured. These procedures are to include notification of child's parent, guardian, or other person having legal custody and provision for emergency medical care or first aid;
- Provision for a first aid kit which must be kept stocked for emergency treatment according to district policy. First aid supplies must be kept in a clean container and in an area not accessible to children; and
- Provisions for appropriate care of any animal kept indoors or outdoors in the Prekindergarten Program. It is important that animals be in good health, show no evidence of carrying disease, and pose no threat to the children participating in the program.

Nutrition

Prekindergarten Programs must provide at least one meal for children, served in the classroom, in accordance with the publication *Nutrition: The Early Childhood Program*. Programs may apply for reimbursement under the National School Lunch and Child Nutrition Act. Money may be budgeted in the Prekindergarten budget to make up the difference between the money available through reimbursement and the actual cost of the meal. No family enrolled in Prekindergarten may be charged for food. All food costs are to be computed according to the instructions prepared by the Bureau of School Food Management. Reimbursement may be claimed only if the program is operating in compliance with State and Federal regulations. Meals for nonprofessional staff may be included in the budget.

Where school lunch programs do not exist, Prekindergarten personnel should assume responsiblity for purchasing and preparing food and keeping records to document claims.

Programs serving children three hours or less must provide one reimbursable meal (breakfast or lunch) which will meet the nutritional needs of children. Decisions about the type and number of meals to be served should be made on the basis of the following:

- Length of daily program;
- Time of operation (A.M., P.M. beginning and ending time of program, etc.);
- Children receiving a nutritional meal at home; and
- Children's eating patterns;

Quality programs provide nutrition services that include the following:

- Provision of regularly scheduled snacks or meals that are appropriate for the children served and the program's schedule;
- Many cooking and tasting experiences in the classroom;
- The integration of nutrition education and good eating habits into the daily learning program;
- The identification, referral, and follow-up of children's nutritional needs and problems;
- Sharing of menu planning and nutritional information with parents; and
- Development of good health and hygiene habits (e.g., children and adults should wash their hands before any meal).

Meals are to served regularly in children's classrooms. It is recommended that food be served family style. Adults must be seated at the table to interact and eat with the children. Meal time is considered an important part of the day, a time for learning and conversation, for developing language skills, exploring concepts of measurement, of textures and taste, of sharing and enjoyment. Food is not to be used as a reward or punishment. Special eating experiences such as in the cafeteria, a restaurant, or on a picnic are encouraged.

Menus must be reviewed for nutritional content, variety, and quantity by a person qualified in nutrition. In addition, they must be dated, distributed to parents, and posted in a place accessible to the parents and the Department. It is recommended that menus be planned to acknowledge the special nutritional needs of young children, and to recognize the need to provide foods familiar to children. Prekindergarten and food service staff are encouraged to work together to develop appropriate modification of school lunch menus to provide food that children like in easily managed portions.

G. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

The Prekindergarten Program must have a daily plan consistent with the philosophy and goals of a sound developmental program and reflect knowledge of research

regarding growth and development of young children as described in the publication, *A Good Day for Young Children: The Early Childhood Education Program* and *Philosophical Base: The Early Childhood Program.*

A developmentally based curriculum must be planned. It must be appropriate for the ages and developmental stages of the children in the group. It must be child-oriented and attend to the differing needs and interests of the children served. It must demonstrate ways to develop children's self-esteem and positive attitude towards schools and learning.

A Prekindergarten curriculum must be planned to encourage children to be actively involved in the learning process. It should be an integrated approach around themes that are meaningful to four-year-olds. It must allow for a variety of learning styles and provide developmentally appropriate activities and materials. The program must be designed to be multicultural and nonsexist. The sharing of cultures and appreciation of diversity should be addressed. Emphasis should be placed on the child's learning through communicating with peers and adults, through interaction with a stimulating environment, and through concrete, "firsthand" experiences. An appropriate prekindergarten curriculum includes the following:

- realistic and age-appropriate expectations and outcomes;
- goals and activities that are planned to build on the individual strengths and interests of the children in the classroom;
- staff available to provide warm, supportive relationships on a one-to-one basis, and to encourage children's curiosity about one another and their exploration of the environment;
- content based on the staff's knowledge of child development, and on observations and recordings of each child's strengths, interests, and developmental progress;
- activities developed to meet any special educational and/or linguistic needs of the children enrolled;
- activities presented bilingually when appropriate for the child's level of development;
- activities and materials that are concrete, real and/or representational and relevant to the life-experiences of the children involved;
- a daily program that consistently provides the routines and degree of structure that meets the individual needs of the children enrolled;
- a broad spectrum of activities and materials that increase in difficulty, complexity and challenge commensurate with the children's increasing understandings and skills;
- daily opportunities for children to make choices and select from a variety of activities;
- a flexible daily schedule that provides a positive balance of activities that are:
  indoor/outdoor
  quiet/active
  individual/small group/larger group
  child-initiated/staff-initiated;
- large blocks of uninterruped time for children to explore their enviornment and complete self-initiated tasks;
- expectations that reflect the heterogeneous backgrounds, skills and abilities of the children and families served, recognizing and supporting cultural and linguistic diversity;
- experiences and materials that address the linguistic needs of children enrolled whose primary language is not English which might include English as a Second Language activities, stories, songs, and activities presented bilingually, and ongoing native language development; and
- goals and objectives which respect and match individual children's developing capabilities, taking into consideration those children with special needs and strengths, those from differing cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and those with handicapping conditions. "Pull-out" Programs and/or activities are considered inappropriate.

The quality of a program for young children depends primarily on positive ***staff-child interactions***. Because of the critical impact that *all staff* serving prekindergarten children and families have on the ultimate success of this early intervention program when selecrting staff, preference should be given to those who demonstrate considerable skills, warmth, and concern for interpersonal relationships and reflect the ethnicity, culture, and language of the children and families served. This includes those staff who have consistent contact with the children and families such as secretaries, custodians, food service workers, bus drivers, and all who function as part of the prekindergarten team. An essential supportive learning climate is developed by staff who:

- respond with respect to individual children's attributes, attitudes, and abilities;
- welcome children and adults of all cultural and linguistic backgrounds with equal respect, consideration, and opportunities to participate in all activities;

- provide time and varied opportunities for children to communicate;
- encourage children to share experiences, ideas, and feelings, by asking open-ended questions and conversing individually with children, preferably at the child's eye level;
- promote children's successful completion of tasks by providing support, focused attention, physical proximity, and verbal encouragement;
- are aware of causes and signs of undue stress in children's behavior, and provide appropriate activities and techniques to alleviate this condition;
- are sensitive to the symptoms that indicate possible child abuse and know how to take appropriate action;
- develop self-esteem by expressing acceptance and respect regardless of the child's gender, race, religion, language, cultural or socio-economic background, or handicap;
- give a priority to the development of self-control and independence; and
- provide positive, consistent guidance, and supervision at all times.

These adult attributes, essential for working effectively with young children, should be used as criteria in assigning staff members to Prekindergarten Programs.

1. Staffing Patterns and Qualifications

The Prekindergarten Program must be sufficiently staffed by qualified personnel who provide personalized attention to children's individual needs and differences, promote their physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development, and support and strengthen their families. The following requisites should be considered when selecting staff:

- previous training and/or experiences with prekindergarten age children;
- basic understanding of child development;
- knowledge of and commitment to a comprehensive, coordinated approach to education and demonstrated committment to early childhood philosophy;
- knowledge of issues pertaining to the limited English proficient population, and if necessary, ability to teach in two languages;
- willingness to work with parents and to communicate with them on an ongoing basis;
- demonstrated ability to work as part of a team; and
- willingness to participate in ongoing staff development and training.

A staff member should be identified to coordinate each component: program for children, parent involvement, health (including nutrition, physical, and emotional health); and social services. Creative combinations of roles may be possible where special skills are available (e.g., secretary/nurse, parent coordinator/social worker).

In programs where large numbers of families speak a language other than English (e.g., Spanish, Haitian-Creole, Chinese) it is recommended that a staff member who speaks that language be assigned to work with children and parents.

Any change in staffing should be reported to the New York State Education Department within 10 days. Descriptions for all staff positions including administrative and supervisory personnel must be described on the New York State Prekindergarten Program Staff Position Description Form. The following staffing patterns are to be followed:

No person (principal, nurse, social worker, speech therapist, psychologist) who is already employed full time in a district can have a part of his or her salary paid from Prekindergarten funds. Persons who are part-time employees may have an additional portion of their salary paid from Prekindergarten funds commensurate with the amount of service given to the Prekindergarten Program (e.g., a psychologist may be paid 50 percent from Head Start and 50 percent from Prekindergarten or a district psychologist who works only 80 percent for a district may have an additional 20 percent of his or her salary benefits paid from Prekindergarten funds).

Director/Coordinator:

A full-time director/coordinator is recommended for a program serving 100 or more children. In smaller programs, a director/coordinator should be assigned for a documented portion of time that is commensurate with the size of the program. Larger programs should include additional supervisory staff in relation to the size of the program. All assignments of a Prekindergarten Director/Coordinator that are prorated as described should be approved by the Department.

The person designated as the director/coordinator should have experience in the education of young children, with demonstrated knowledge of child development and its application to effective early childhood educational practices. Directors/Coordinators/Teacher Specialists must possess a teaching license certificate valid for service in the early childhood grades. All persons who spend more than 25 percent of their time in supervision must hold a New York State School Administrators and Supervisors Certificate.

The responsibilities of the Prekindergarten Director/-Coordinator include:

- preparing the proposal and budget and implementing the program as described;
- providing leadership and assuming overall responsibility for the operation of a quality program;
- ensuring equal access to services for all children and families;
- developing and supervising recruitment of all interested and eligible four-year-olds;
- assuring that all six components — health and nutrition, social services, staff development, parent involvement, continuity, and a developmental educational program for children — are provided in compliance with Part 151 of the Regulations of the Commissioner;
- supervising all staff;
- observing individual children and sharing observations with classroom staff;
- planning training activities with staff input, conducting staff meetings, and actively participating in staff development sessions;
- assisting and supporting the Parent Advisory Committee and participating in parent activities;
- developing a plan for ongoing evaluation of the program with input from the staff, district personnel, and Parent Advisory Committee;
- facilitating the transition from Prekindergarten to primary grades including ongoing communication and involvement with receiving teachers;
- providing advocacy and maintaining good working relationships with district staff, including principals and staff of elementary schools who ultimately serve prekindergarten children and families;
- networking with other Prekindergarten Directors and State Education Department personnel through attendance at meetings, participation on committees and local service agencies, etc.;
- providing leadership and ensuring the existence of a Early Childhood Coordination Committee; and
- implementing the recruitment, training, and scheduling of volunteers.

Classroom Staff

One teacher and one assistant/aide must be budgeted for each classroom group of 16 children. One teacher and two assistants/aides must be budgeted for each classroom group of 18 to 20 children. At least one staff person or volunteer should be available who speaks the native language of the child (if other than English) and/or parent.

Teacher

Prekindergarten teachers must have a valid New York State Teaching certificate in early childhood education (N-3) or elementary education (N-6) or (K-8). Prekindergarten teachers should have specialized training and/or previous experience in early childhood education. If large numbers of students whose primary language is not English are enrolled, teachers should have some training in Bilingual Education and/or English as a Second Language (ESL). A bilingual teacher must be certified or licensed in the area of bilingual education or foreign language instruction as described in sections 80.9(a) and 80.16(d) of the Commissioner's Regulations.

Classroom Assistants and/or Aides

Prekindergarten teacher assistants and aides must possess at least a high school diploma. These positions should be filled in compliance with local personnel policies. To be certified by the State, teacher assistants must have completed at least six credits of college work. Because teachers and aides or assistants work together as a team, persons selected to work in classrooms should demonstrate their interest in working with young children and have some previous training or experience in working with this age group. A bilingual teacher assistant/aide must be fluent in the language of the population served.

Ancillary Staff (Social Services, Parent Involvement, Health Components)

Social Worker

A full-time social worker is recommended for a program of 120 children. Smaller programs may employ a part-time social worker prorated as to the number of children served. Larger programs may provide for the social services component through a staffing pattern of trained paraprofessionals who are supervised and working closely with someone qualified in social work or in a related field. These services may be supplemented by linkages with appropriate community agencies. If the program serves a large number of families whose primary language is not English, the social service team should include bilingual staff. The social worker or coordinator of the social services component

is considered the leader of the social services team and is expected to conduct regularly scheduled weekly or biweekly team meetings to share information, discuss the status of intervention activities, and plan future strategies.

A social worker assigned to the Prekindergarten Program must be a person appropriately certified or licensed in section 80.3(f) of the Commissioner's Regulations.

Family Assistant/Family Worker

As part of the social services team, many programs include a paraprofessional position which is designated Family Assistant, Family Worker, or Parent Coordinator who is to provide more extensive outreach to families. The intent is to include a community member who can serve as a liaison between home and school to better ensure effective two-way communication. The Family Assistant initiates and maintains contact with all parents in order to assist them in meeting their needs and those of the child. If appropriate, this person may need to be bilingual.

The family worker/assistant assigned to the Program must be a community member, have completed high school, and have experience working with parents and/or community groups.

Parent Involvement Coordinator

The person responsible for the parent involvement component should be familiar with the community and have a demonstrated interest and skill in working with all parents, including those from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. There should be a commitment to supporting families, building effective home-school relationships and involving parents in meaningful ways in the education of their young children. Persons with some training in social work, public health or other human services may be selected. This position may be assumed by other staff such as the Social Worker, Director, Family Worker, etc.

A parent involvement coordinator must have completed high school and have experience and training working with parents.

Health

At this age level, there should be consistent, ongoing assistance for children and parents on health and safety matters. The major focus of the prekindergarten health program is on prevention and early identification of health problems. Programs of 200 or more children may employ a full-time health professional (nurse, registered nurse, school nurse teacher, nurse practitioner). Smaller programs should designate a portion of a person's time to work with the Prekindergarten team and attend to the children's health on a consistent basis. Some programs employ a trained health aide to work with the school nurse to provide daily support for this component. The child's permanent health record should be initiated during the prekindergarten year.

Nutrition

The school lunch director, or other person with knowledge about the nutritional needs of young children must be available to consult with the director, plan, prepare, and review school lunch/breakfast/snack menus, and adapt them as necessary for young children. Parent suggestions are to be welcomed and foods representative of the diverse cultures of the families should be included whenever possible. Arrangements must be made to serve meals family style in classrooms with children and adults seated together at small tables. Records of eligibility for reimbursement for meals should be maintained at each site.

Other Professionals

Depending upon the size of the program and the needs of the children and families served, other qualified professionals such as a speech specialist or psychologist may be hired as part of the prekindergarten team. Paraprofessionals, working under the supervision of competent, qualified professional staff, may be hired to provide additional staffing for the social services, parent involvement, and health components. All such positions should comply with local personnel policies.

Volunteers

The recruitment and use of volunteers of all ages, including parents, senior citizens, community members, elementary, high school and college students is encouraged. Volunteers should be selected for their interest and potential contribution to the lives of children, parents and staff. Appropriate orientation and training must be provided and volunteer participation included in all program planning.

Consultants

Consultants may be employed with the approval of the Division of Child Development Services. (See the publications Fiscal Guidelines for Federal and State Aided Grants.) The role of the consultant is to provide additional support to maintain program quality. Consultants may be recommended by the Department to augment early childhood supervision and training.

When the program serves large numbers of families who are not proficient in English, certified bilingual instructional and support professionals, and/or consul-

tants must be available to provide assistance. Trained volunteers may also be helpful.

2. Equipment, Supplies, and Materials

The Prekindergarten Program must provide a sufficient quantity and variety of materials and play equipment which are multicultural, nonsexist, and appropriate to the age of the children and their developmental levels and interests. Such materials and play equipment should include, but not limited to the following:

- easels, brushes, paints, paper, scissors, paste, collage, crayons, pencils, markers and chalk, and aprons;
- musical instruments, records, and record player;
- magnets, magnifying lenses, animals, fish, and plants;
- sandbox, water table, sand tools, metal or plastic measuring spoons, sieves, boats, funnels and plastic bottles, straws, and corks;
- sink, stove, refrigerator, dining table, chairs, dolls of various ethnic origins, doll beds, carriage, shopping carts, dishes, eating and cooking utensils, full-length mirror, curtains, window boxes, pictures, tablecloth, and telephones;
- book display case, culturally diverse books, magazines, felt board and materials, and puppets;
- hats, tool kit, neckties, stethoscope, doctor's bag, briefcase, pocketbooks, telephones, jewelry, dress-up clothes, clothespins, play money, cash register, notepads, and stationery;
- workbench, hammers, flathead nails, soft lumber, wheels, bottle tops, assorted spools, leather and felt pieces, dowel sticks, and sandpaper.
- manipulatives such as pegs and pegboards, large beads, puzzles, materials for matching, sorting, grouping, sequencing (brought, donated, and teacher made) and interlocking manipulatives such as legos;
- unit blocks, trucks, cars, airplanes, traffic signs, wooden or rubber animals, family figures, and community helpers;
- balls, beanbags, hoops, parachutes, wagons, swings, slides, and climbing apparatus; and
- equipment for cooking activities in the classroom.

3. Discipline

Positive discipline practices in Prekindergarten Programs should be age-appropriate and lead to the development of each child's self-confidence, self-esteem and self-sufficiency. These practices should set clear and consistent limits that are understandable to the child and be based on responsible and realistic expectations.

The Prekindergarten Program must establish and inform all parents and staff of a written pupil discipline policy. Such policy must include the following:

- Any discipline used must relate to the child's misbehavior and be handled without prolonged delay on the part of the staff.
- Room isolation is prohibited.
- Corporal punishment is prohibited.
- Denial of food is prohibited.

4. Evaluation

The Prekindergarten Program must have a comprehensive plan for evaluating the program. The plan should include methods of assessing the effectiveness of program components building upon the strengths of children, families and staff. The intent of the assessment is to provide information necessary for the improvement of the program.

Programs may design their own methods for evaluating the various program components. The ongoing assessment of program quality should involve staff of the Prekindergarten Program, other district staff and administrators, parents, and members of the community.

The assessment of program quality may be accomplished through activities such as:

- ongoing observation and assessment of program and staff;
- individual and group interviews with parents, staff, administrators, community members, and children;
- small and large group discussions of issues of concern to parents and staff;
- opportunities to share information on individual children with receiving kindergarten staff to insure appropriate placement and curriculum planning;
- analysis of the year's work in relationship to each component, including recommendations for strengthening the program;
- parent questionnaires or group interviews to obtain feedback about the program and the parent's perception of changes in the child;

Programs should collect and have on file data such as:

- initial applications or intake interviews containing up-to-date information about the child and family;
- Index of Need forms;
- number of children and families enrolled;

- attendance of children;
- records of parent participation;
- records of home visits;
- immunization records;
- school lunch records;
- health assessments, referrals, and follow-up;
- records of referrals to community agencies and follow-up.

Among the records useful to the ongoing assessment of program effectiveness are the following:

- assessment of children's growth and development by staff through recorded observations Descriptive Reviews of children;
- records of team meetings or staff reviews;
- records of parent conferences;
- dated compilations of children's work;
- teachers' records of classroom activities;
- records of parent involvement activities;
- records of staff development activities;
- records of activities of the Early Childhood School/District/Community Coordination Committee; and
- minutes of Parent Advisory Committee meetings.

The specific content of these records is to be determined by the district in order to implement a valid evaluation plan.

Parents should be informed and involved in all scheduled screening processes (e.g., speech and language, vision, hearing). Teachers who need additional information about a child may request an individual developmental screening. Such instruments, when used, should be age, gender, culturally, linguistically, and socio-economically appropriate for the child being examined. They should not be used to prohibit or delay entrance, nor for placement, or retention in a particular program.

To ensure ongoing program quality, each Prekindergarten Program at the end of the school year must:

- assess its compliance with Part 151 of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education and the New York State Prekindergarten Guidelines;
- evaluate successes of the program;
- evaluate continuing unresolved problems; and
- incorporate suggestions for change into the annual Consolidated Application.

H. STAFF DEVELOPMENT

A yearly plan for staff development is required in the Consolidated Application. The Prekindergarten Program must include a plan for regularly scheduled staff development activities in accordance with the strengths and needs of program staff as planned and developed by the staff. The plan must also include training for volunteers. Such a plan may be coordinated with district staff development opportunities such as superintendent's conference days, or in-service courses. Programs are encouraged to explore the development of career ladders, linkages with credit and degree-granting programs and alternative methods for securing training. Attendance at conferences in New York State is encouraged.

The plan should include activities such as the following:

- orientation sessions for all staff, including those new to the team, to ensure knowledge and understanding of, and concurrence with, the goals of the program;
- regular meetings of the entire staff to explore new approaches, enrich understanding of children and their development and enhance team approaches;
- when appropriate, a focus on effective teaching strategies for first and second language development and acquisition;
- regular meetings of the staff members responsible for each component (e.g., classroom professionals, social services teams);
- sessions designed to increase awareness of the special strengths of children and families from all economic, ethnic, language, and cultural groups;
- total staff training sessions designed to develop observation and record-keeping skills and to personalize planning based upon children's strengths and interests;
- total staff training to support parents, developing ways to work effectively with parents from all cultural and linguistic groups and focus on the importance of parent involvement to the children's learning; and
- activities planned to include prekindergarten, kindergarten, and early elementary teachers in order to provide continuity of learning opportunities for children and families.

When appropriate, Special Education Training and Resource Centers (SETRC) should be contacted to provide staff and parent training for families of children with handicapping conditions enrolled in the Prekindergarten Program.

I. PARENT INVOLVEMENT

In Prekindergarten Programs, parents are to be supported as the prime educators of their children and viewed as "partners" in their child's educational process. They are welcomed as observers and contributors to the program. Programs which serve families who speak a language other than English should provide bilingual staff or interpreters to enhance parent communication and understanding. The active involvement of parents in all aspects of the program is considered an essential component to each child's progress and the program's success.

A Parent Advisory Committee, representative of the population served, must be formed early in the school year. The committee must meet at least four times a year. The size and composition of the group will depend upon the size and composition of the Prekindergarten Program. It may be a subcommittee of the PTA. Its purpose is to advise the Director/Coordinator and Prekindergarten staff in the planning, operation and evaluation of the program. Representatives of this group should serve on the School/District/Community Early Childhood Coordination Committee. A staff member(s) must be designated as a resource to the group and a liaison to the program.

The application should present a detailed plan for active parent participation with a wide range of options. In order to meet the variety of parent routines and needs, the activities must be scheduled and/or repeated at varying times, days, and places.

In order to provide a parent program that is vital and relevant to each child's family, the staff should become familiar with, understand and respect individual family lifestyles. Parent activities must be planned using a personalized approach, with expectations of participation based on parents' strengths, needs, language, interests, and family and/or cultural constraints.

When a program is planned to provide a variety of activities, scheduled at different times and places and originating from parent requests and questions, the parent is recognized as a valued "partner". The intent is to group and regroup for parent activities as appropriate — some total group, some small group, some individual — to try to incorporate all the parents in the program. Provisions must be made to communicate with parents in their native language.

Parents should receive orientation to the parent involvement component, before or soon after the child enters the program. The responsibility for development of the plan for parent involvement should be shared, whenever possible, by Prekindergarten staff, parents, and appropriate district personnel. All staff are expected to be involved in supporting the effective implementation of the parent involvement component. Parent involvement, social services and health staff should work together to share information and plans to integrate the services provided to children and families.

It is expected that Prekindergarten Programs include opportunities for parents to:

- participate in an advisory role in the planning, operation, and evaluation of the program;
- be well informed about program goals, philosophy, and services;
- be knowledgeable about program policies and procedures;
- be kept informed on a regular basis about their child's progress;
- participate in conferences with the teachers and other appropriate staff in order to share observations, ideas and concerns about the child and family;
- meet with staff for the purpose of exchanging information about the child's progress, classroom activities, and family needs;
- regularly observe or volunteer in the classroom;
- share their skills, interests, and cultures in the classrooms as an integral part of the children's program;
- participate in meetings, study circles, and ad hoc committees (e.g., field trips, PTA and program activities, fund-raising);
- participate in training leading to work as a paid substitute in the program;
- participate in parenting education workshops and programs, conducted or arranged by Prekindergarten staff. Parent education topics, in addition to those planned by the parents themselves, should include, but not be limited to the following:
  - goals and objectives of the children's program;
  - child-rearing practices, with sensitivity to and awareness of different cultural and linguistic groups;
  - child growth and development;
  - information, techniques, and materials for supporting children's cognitive, social and emotional growth at home;
  - preventive health practices;
  - sound nutritional practices;
  - consumer education;
  - connections with the education, training, food assistance, social service, and health care resources in the community;
  - local career opportunities;
  - positive techniques of communicating and interacting with public school personnel.

J. SOCIAL SERVICES

The Prekindergarten must include a comprehensive social service program to address the social service needs of children and parents. The goal of the social services component is to assist families in improving the conditions and quality of family life. The booklet entitled, *The School Social Worker in the New York State Prekindergarten Program* may be used as a reference. Some data obtained from families must be kept confidential and must not become part of the child's permanent school record. A plan outlining the provision of social services should include the following activities:

- social service needs assessment for each child and his/her family unit;
- specialized recruitment and social services needs assessment for children and families of cultural and linguistic diversity, using appropriate interpreters and/or interviewers;
- referral and follow-up as indicated in the social services assessment;
- implementation of regular meetings of the social services team (social worker and/or family worker; nurse and/or nurse's aide; and other appropriate specialists, teaching staff and/or administrators) to review, coordinate, and record team activities;
- data collection based on classroom observations;
- attendance monitoring and follow-up of absentees;
- team home visits prior to the opening of the children's program, at the beginning of the year and thereafter on a regular basis;
- counseling, support and crisis intervention;
- maintenance of up-to-date records on attendance, family data, referral, and follow-up activities, and other social services;
- parent group meetings and training sessions providing interpreters or bilingual presentations when appropriate; and
- coordination with, and referral to, personnel from the school district and other community agencies (e.g., resources for education, food, housing, legal services, child abuse and neglect, crisis intervention).

K. CONTINUITY OF PROGRAM AND SERVICES

Prekindergarten Programs must be concerned with the continuity of appropriate programs and comprehensive services for the prekindergarten children and families through the primary grades.

The rationale for plans designed to promote continuity of children's learning from kindergarten through grade three is described in the publication *Continuity: The Early Childhood Education Program.* The intent is to provide developmentally appropriate activities designed to enhance children's strengths and interests. Plans should include options such as:

- involvement of consultants to work with staff to develop observation and record-keeping skills, enhance understanding of developmentally appropriate activities, and increase awareness of the special interests and strengths of children from varied ethnic, language, and cultural groups in order to incorporate such information into a multicultural approach to curriculum;
- scheduling of team meetings to include teachers and other staff who are working or have worked with the child and family;
- provision of substitutes to free teachers to meet and share information about individual children, to visit other classrooms, etc.;
- provision of in-service training and workshops to enable teachers to design varied experiences to meet individual strengths, incorporate observations into daily planning, relate present and past learning, involve parents in the education of their children and make effective use of colleagues and specialists;
- regular planning and coordination meetings between administrators, and teaching and support staff of the prekindergarten and elementary schools to implement the following:
  - child study teams;
  - use of compatible diagnostic observation and assessment procedures;
  - use of coordinated and appropriate curricula, materials, and equipment;
  - opportunities for continuity of social services and health care;
  - ease of transition and placement from grade to grade;
  - joint training and staff development;
  - continued encouragement and support of parent education and participation.

L. COORDINATION WITH OTHER EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS AND COMMUNITY AGENCIES

The application must include active linkages with other providers of early childhood services, community agencies and institutions. Prekindergarten districts must describe coordination with other programs including any other current sources of funding (legislative grants, special projects, foundation grants, other local, State, or Federal programs such as Community Schools Program, Youth-at-Risk, Community Partnerships and Chapter 1) for prekindergarten. Funding from such sources cannot be used toward the 11 percent local required share. A grant awarded during the current school year should be reported to the Department.

A local Early Childhood Community Coordination Committee must be formed at the school district or building level which will include:

- participants from programs in the community which serve preschool children and their families (prekindergarten, day care, Head Start, private, and parochial nursery schools, etc.);
- representatives from other agencies which serve the families of young children;
- appropriate community policy setters and decision-makers;
- parent members who are representative of the populations served;
- personnel from local colleges and universities.

The purpose of this Committee is to:

- review and assess the existing needs and resources and services available in the community for young children and their families;
- investigate and plan for areas of coordination and collaboration of existing services, funding resources, training, shared use of program personnel health services, transportation, child care, etc., to better meet the needs of children, families, staff and community;
- develop mutual short- and long-term goals and plans to provide resources and services that are not available; and
- serve as active advocates for improved services for the children and families in the community.

The final report for the Prekindergarten Program should include a summary record of the meetings, recommendations, and activities of this Committee.

VII. Compliance With New York State Prekindergarten Regulations

Programs must be in compliance with the New York State Prekindergarten Regulations to provide the essential program components and services to meet the particular needs of the children and families of the community. ***Prior approval for any exceptions of Regulations must be obtained from the State Education Department with written documentation as follow-up.***

VIII. APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 – DEFINITIONS

Base Year means the school year prior to the school year for which a grant is paid;

Collaborative Prekindergarten Model means an early childhood program, jointly developed and funded by the State Education Department and the Department of Social Services and/or Head Start to provide developmentally appropriate activities and comprehensive services for not less than five days per week and not less than six hours per day;

Community Schools Prekindergarten Model means an early childhood component of a Community Schools Program (CSP) which provides developmentally appropriate activities and comprehensive services for not less than five days per week and not less than six hours per day (full year, when funding is available);

Consolidated Application means a formal request by a school district or BOCES on forms provided by the Department;

Corporal Punishment means any act of physical force upon a child for the purpose of punishing that child, as defined in Section 19.5 of this Commissioner's Regulations;

Developmentally Appropriate means early childhood activities that demonstrate awareness of and sensitivity to the stages of each child's intellectual, physical, cultural, emotional, and social development;

Economically Disadvantaged Child means a child whose family is eligible for some form of assistance such as Aid to Families of Dependent Children, free or reduced price school lunch, food stamps, Medicaid, unemployment compensation, or disability compensation;

Educationally Deprived Child means a prekindergarten child whose educational attainment on a screening device approved by the Department is below the level appropriate to such child's age;

Home-Based Prekindergarten Model means an early childhood program which provides developmentally appropriate activities for children and comprehensive services for parents through regular visits by a trained staff member in the home;

Learning Center means a designated area in the prekindergarten classroom designed for specific kinds of activities;

Local Early Childhood Community Coordination Committee means a group of individuals including parents, representatives from other agencies which serve the families of young children, policymakers, and personnel from local colleges and universities;

Parent means a parent, a legal guardian, or another person in parental relation to a prekindergarten child;

Parent Advisory Committee means a group of parents, representative of the population served that meets at least four times a year with the prekindergarten staff to discuss concerns and issues pertaining to the education of prekindergarten children enrolled in the program and to make recommendations for improving the quality of life for these families;

Prekindergarten Children means children who will be four years of age on or before December 1st of the current school year, or who will otherwise be first eligible to enter public school kindergarten commencing with the following school year, or who attend a program for which an application to serve any three- or four-year-olds has been approved;

Prekindergarten Program means an early childhood program which provides activities for prekindergarten children for not less than 12 hours per week and not less than two and one half hours per day but not more than three hours per day that meets the developmental needs of the children;

Program Variance means a formal request by a school district/BOCES to the Commissioner to be exempted from specific regulatory requirements;

Program Variation means a prekindergarten program that is somewhat different from the traditional prekindergarten program;

School District shall mean either a school district or a Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) acting on behalf of more than one school district;

School Year means the period commencing on the 1st day of July in each year and ending on the 30th day of June next following;

Traditional Prekindergarten Model means an early childhood program which provides developmentally appropriate activities and comprehensive services for children for not less than 12 hours per week and not less than two and a half hours per day.

APPENDIX 2 – PUBLICATIONS

Copies of the following publications may be obtained from the New York State Education Department, Division of Child Development Services at either of the following addresses: Room 364 Education Building Annex, Albany, New York 12234, (518) 474-4947 or 55 Hanson Place, Brooklyn, New York 11217, (718) 260-2782.

1. *Children's Spaces*
2. *Continuity: The Early Childhood Education Program*
3. *Fiscal Guidelines for Federal and State Aided Grants*
4. *A Good Day for Young Children: The Early Childhood Education Program*
5. *Health Services in Schools*
6. *Nutrition: The Early Childhood Program*
7. *Philosophical Base: The Early Childhood Program*
8. *The School Social Worker in the New York State Prekindergarten Program*
9. *Multi-Cultural Education*
10. *Appropriate Assessment*
11. *Parent Involvement*
12. *Staff Development*

APPENDIX 3 - SAMPLE FORMS

- Index of Need
- Food Service
- Application for Request for Program Variances
- New York State Prekindergarten Program Staff Position Description Form

Program	1991-92 *Index of Need* Eligibility for New York State Prekindergarten Program*	*Facility #*	*Classroom #*

Child's Initials																				
Non-English Speaking Household																				
Child with Diagnosed Handicapping Condition																				
Racial/Ethnic Code**																				
Indicators of Limited Income/Eligibility																				
Aid to Families with Dependent Children																				
Food Stamps																				
Medicaid																				
Free or Reduced Price School Lunch																				
Day Care Subsidy																				
Unemployment/Disability Compensation																				
Up to 200% of Current Poverty Level																				
Indicators of Special Needs																				
Crowded Living Conditions																				
Substandard Housing																				
Temporary Housing																				
Housing in Remote Rural Area																				
Frequent Address Change																				
Single Parent Household																				
Size of Family																				
Chronic Illness of Parent or Other Family Member																				
Foster Child/Surrogate Parents																				
Parents Working/In School / Training																				
Teen Parents																				
Family Record of Problems(Low School Achievement, Dropout, Substance Abuse)																				
Check Children Selected for Program																				

*** 80 percent of those enrolled must have at least one check under indicators of limited income.**

**** AI - American Indian or Alaskan Native, A/P - Asian or Pacific Islander, B - Black, H - Hispanic, W - White**

NEW YORK STATE PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAM
FOOD SERVICE WORKSHEET

One meal per day, either breakfast or lunch, must be served to each child enrolled in a part day Perkindergarten. Additional meals are necessary for children in extended day programs. *No money for food services can be collected from a child or family.* The difference between the money reimbursed from the State and Federal school lunch program, and the actual cost of each meal is charged to the Prekindergarten. *Since adults are expected to eat with children, costs of meals for* ***nonprofessional staff and parent volunteers*** *may also be charged to the program.* Each participating district is expected to request reimbursement thourgh the National School Lunch Program.

Please show a breakdown of food costs on this page. Transfer the costs to the category: **SUPPLIES AND MATERIALS** (code 45) on the FS-10.

BREAKFAST

Free Number of children _____ x number of meals per year _____
x difference between reimbursement and actual cost _____ = _____
e.g., 13 children x 135 meals per year x 0 = 0

Reduced Number of children _____ x number of meals per year _____
x difference between reimbursement and actual cost _____ = _____
e.g., 44 children x 135 meals per year x .25 = $1,485.

Noneligible Number of children _____ x number of meals per year _____
x difference between reimbursement and actual cost _____ = _____

LUNCH

Free Number of children _____ x number of meals per year _____
x difference between reimbursement and actual cost _____ = _____

Reduced Number of children _____ x number of meals per year _____
x difference between reimbursement and actual cost _____ = _____
e.g., 44 children x 135 meals per year x .25 = $1,485.

Noneligible Number of children _____ x number of meals per year _____
x difference between reimbursement and actual cost _____ = _____

Staff Number of adults _____ x number of meals per year _____
x cost per meal _____ = _____

Special Foods _____

TOTAL FOOD SERVICE COSTS _____

revised 6/91

The University of the State of New York
THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Division of Child Development Services

APPLICATION REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF VARIANCES FOR THE NEW YORK STATE PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAM
(As provided in Sections 151.3 (b) and 151.11 (e) of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education)

PLEASE READ ALL OF THE FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS
BEFORE PREPARING THE APPLICATION

Section 151.3 (b) and 151.11 (e) of the Commissioner's Regulations provides for variances from the requirements in Part 151 for Prekindergarten Programs.

Guidelines

- The Education Department will consider for approval only those requests which will provide developmentally based curricula appropriate for the ages and developmental stages of the children in the program.
- An application for a variance must be received and approved prior to the implementation of the requested program variance.
- Once a variance has been approved, any changes which significantly affect the program require advance approval from the Commissioner at least one month prior to implementation. Such requests must be submitted to the Division of Child Development Services, State Education Department, Albany, NY 12234.

Procedure

Forward two copies of the application as indicated on the attached cover page. Fill out the cover page and attach it to the following information:

A. Specific Sections for which the variance is requested

List the number and a brief description of each section of Part 151 for which a variance is requested.

B. Description of Program

The description of the program and attachments hereto must be in sufficient detail to enable State Education Department reviewers to understand what is proposed. Describe the program which will be used to meet the educational needs of the children being served. For each variance include the starting and ending dates of operation. Approval automatically terminates on the ending date approved by the State Education Department.

Each application must include the following:

1. the specific regulation(s) for which a variance is requested;
2. the reason for the variance request;
3. a description of the program designed to meet the needs of the children being served;
4. a rationale of why the program will meet the needs of the children served;
5. how this variance equals or exceeds minimum requirements or offers a substantially different approach to obtaining the program requirements in the regulations;
6. the number of children affected and the length of time they will be affected;
7. a description of how this variance affects special populations; e.g., at-risk children, and handicapped children; and
8. a statement of assurance that the variance will not deny any child the opportunity to participate in the program.

Assistance

If the preparer of this application is uncertain as to the interpretation of a requirement in Part 151, he/she may write to the Division of Child Development Services, State Education Department, Albany, NY 12234 or call (518) 474-4947.

APPLICATION REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF VARIANCES FOR THE NEW YORK STATE PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

To: Division of Child Development Services
State Education Department

From: School District/BOCES Name _____

Address _____

Name of person completing this form _____

Title _____

Address _____

Telephone Number _____

I request approval of the following variance(s) from the provisions of Part 151 of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education as provided by Section 151.3 (b) and/or Section 151.11 (e). I understand that the purpose of this variance must be to enable the implementation of a program designed to provide excellence in education. I have also read and understand Section 151.3 (b) and Section 151.11 (e) of the Regulations of the Commissioner. The attached application has been completed in accordance with the accompanying instructions.

Section 151.3 (b)

_____ Age of children

_____ Limitation in program hours

_____ The number of days per week that services are provided

_____ Staffing patterns

_____ Home-based programs Section 151.11 (e)

_____ Class size (check one or more choice(s) below):

_____ The minimum class size shall not be less than 16 children with one prekindergarten teacher and at least one teacher assistant/aide. (Section 151.11 (c))

_____ The maximum class size shall not exceed 20 children with one prekindergarten teacher and at least two teacher assistants/aides. (Section 151.11 (d))

_____
Typewritten or Printed Name of the Superintendent of Schools or Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES).

_____
Signature of the Superintendent of Schools or Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES).

_____
Date Signed

NEW YORK STATE PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAM
STAFF POSITION DESCRIPTION FORM

Project No: _____

Position descriptions must be provided for all positions budgeted in Code 15 and Code 15 of the FS-10. A copy of this form must be submitted for each title (preK director, social worker, teacher, community aide, etc.) This position description form must be submitted with the consolidated application being submitted to the New York State Education Department. **MORE THAN ONE INDIVIDUAL MAY BE LISTED PER FORM PROVIDED JOB TITLES AND DESCRIPTIONS ARE IDENTICAL.**

Title of Position (as listed on budget): _____

Name of Immediate Supervisor: _____

Description of Duties: _____

_____

_____

_____

Name*	Percent of Time Devoted to Budget Activities	Years Experience	Certificate Number	Annual Salary

*If names of personnel are not available at the time the budget is submitted, they should be provided early in the program year.